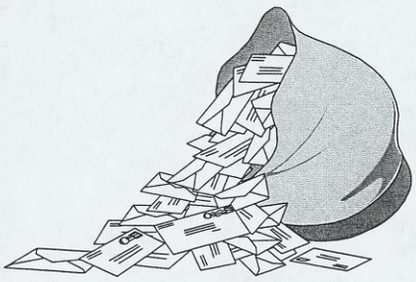
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Vol. 9, No. 5 May, 2001 www.lambdaletters.org LambdaLP@aol.com (916) 965-6851

Trouble in River City

by Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

Yes, there's trouble in River City, as Sacramento is often called. The trouble is the energy crisis. It's acting like the proverbial black hole in space which has such powerful gravitational force that it drags in and destroys everything near it.

The energy crisis poses the serious threat of dragging down and destroying most, if not all, of the important civil rights and health legislation being considered by the state legislature this year. After you learn the details, please do all in your power to help us prevent the destruction of the many important bills that Lambda Letters is supporting this year.

The civil rights bills have to do with thinks like domestic partner benefits, a ban on discrimination against transgendered people, greater protection against spousal abuse, and racial profiling. The health issues have to do with things like protecting those who have a legitimate need for medicinal marijuana, Medi-Cal for poor children, and more effective healthcare for poor people with multiple healthcare problems, such as the combined problems of alcohol and drug abuse and emotional illness.

The energy crisis is putting important legislation at risk in two ways. The first way is financial, the second political.

The **financial risk** is that the state may not have the money to pay for the many important programs that we support. Here's why. The state now purchases much of the electric energy used in the state. It's doing so because the private utilities don't have the money to pay for it. The power generators are reluctant to sell power to the utilities because they fear they will never get paid for it.

Currently the state is spending about $2 billion a month for the electricity it purchases. However, the prices of futures contracts—for the purchase of electricity to be used in the future—indicate that the state's cost for electricity may soon go up sharply. The state may soon be spending as much as $5 billion per month for electricity. State government has had a comfortable surplus for the last few years. Its income has exceeded its expenses. This has left extra money around to fund important civil rights initiatives and new health programs. However, the state's spending on energy has been dragging down that surplus and it may soon disappear.

Governor Davis has said, "Don't worry, the state will sell bonds and use the money gotten from selling them to replace the money currently being spent on electricity." He implies that this will get the state's finances back to where they were before the energy crisis. The problem is that the state's credit rating has

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Lambda Letters Progress Report

Messages Collected

March, 2001	7,764 letters & e-mails
In all of 2001	11,548 letters & e-mails

Dollars Spent

March, 2001	$3,089
In all of 2001	$10,629

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Lambda Letters Project

Mission Statement

To promote people of color, feminist, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and HIV/AIDS status advocacy, and to bring people of color, women, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgendered persons, and persons affected by or living with HIV/AIDS into full participation in American society.

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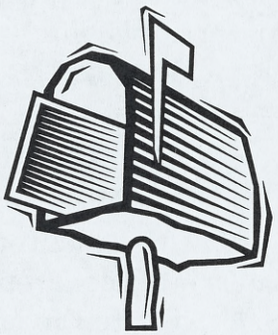
Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender Issue

Oppose School Bullying

by Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

Anyone who has grown up lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered knows that bullying is an everyday experience in America's schools. I know—I went through some really awful harassment and name-calling in grade school. All too often the response from teachers and school authorities is, "Oh well, boys will be boys."

According to a comprehensive study recently published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association,* 10.6 percent of students surveyed said they had been bullied "sometimes" or "weekly," and 16 percent of fifth- through tenth-graders said they had been bullied at least occasionally during the current term. These findings were the result of a survey of over 15,000 students in grades 6–10. Dr. Tonja R. Nansel, a postdoctoral fellow at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development was the lead author of the study.



Unfortunately, the level of violence among school children is rising at a terrifying rate—and not just against queer youth. When I grew up, the weapons of choice were fists. Now they are guns. What is causing the upsurge in school violence? It is a dismaying and very disturbing question. No one really knows for sure. However, most shooters in schools have been outcasts in their schools. Many of them have been the subjects of abuse and harassment by their classmates.

Much of the violence in inner-city schools appears to be the result of conflict between rival gangs. It seems clear, then, that something worth trying is to develop and implement plans to prevent school violence and bullying, and to plan and implement procedures for conflict resolution.

AB 79, introduced by Assemblymember Sally Havice (D–Cerritos), would require school districts to create and implement such plans. We think it deserves your support and we urge you to write to the members of the Assembly Appropriations Committee, urging them to vote for the bill. ###

HIV/AIDS Issue

Support Clean Needles

by Marty Martinez, AIDS Project East Bay

Injection drug use, along with unprotected sex, is one of the leading causes of HIV infection. HIV is passed through needle use when one injection drug user is HIV-positive and leaves traces of infected blood on or in a needle that another drug user then uses. Cleaner needles result in fewer HIV infections. There is much science to indicate that needle exchange programs result in fewer transmissions of the virus.

It would be helpful to allow persons who continue to inject to have access to clean needles. Not all injection drug users are able to get to needle exchange programs or are willing to go. California is one of five states that does not allow a person to purchase a syringe without a prescription. AB 1292, by Dion Aroner (D–Berkeley), would change that.

This bill changes the law to allow the purchase of clean syringes by adults. Experience with other states shows that such a policy does not increase drug use. Instead, it decreases the sharing of needles and syringes, and also decreases the frequency with which police officers are exposed to needlestick pricks in the line of duty.

Please sign and send the enclosed letter to Assemblywoman Helen Thomson, chair of the Assembly Health Committee, where the bill now resides. The bill has recently been turned into a two-year bill because of some opposition by those who erroneously believe the bill will encourage drug use. It is vital to send a clear signal of community support for the bill as soon as possible.

###

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Women's Issue

Cancer Treatment for Poor Women

by Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

Breast cancer is one of the most treatable types of cancer, particularly if it's detected early. The sooner that breast cancer is diagnosed, the better a woman's chance of survival. Both the federal government and the state of California provide early-detection breast cancer screening for poor women. However, many poor women are underinsured or lack any insurance at all. They find it difficult to obtain treatment for the disease once it is diagnosed. Many have to wait until they are declared "permanently" disabled (in stage four of the disease) to qualify for Medi-Cal or Medicaid. By that time, it is too late for most women. As many as 600 poor women die from untimely and preventable deaths from breast cancer each year.

In October 2000, the federal government enacted the Breast and Cervical Cancer Prevention and Treatment Act of 2000. The act provides enhanced matching funds to provide full Medicaid (called Medi-Cal in California) benefits to low-income, uninsured women under 65. The benefits are available for women who are screened for breast and cervical cancer under state or federal programs and who are in need of treatment.

SB 224 was introduced by Assemblymember Jackie Speier (D–San Mateo) in response to that federal legislation. It would allow the state to qualify for the matching federal funds, but it would not require the state to spend any more money than it has already committed to the treatment of breast and cervical cancer. It is estimated that SB 224 would qualify California to receive almost $9 million in federal funds.

We think this is good legislation and we urge you to write and support the bill. ###

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People of Color Issue

Prisoners' Voting Right

by Marty Martinez

Under current law, a person who is a prisoner in jail or is being held in a detention facility is not automatically ineligible to vote. Only those convicted of certain crimes lose their voting rights in California. Yet the criminal justice system imposes barriers on prisoners from voting, even when they are entitled to do so.

For instance, every Californian is entitled to request an absentee ballot. However, in order to do so, that person must be able to get an appropriate application and be able to present proof of registration. Such items are often unavailable to a detained person.

AB 1610 by Assemblymember Rod Wright (D–Los Angeles) would require every detention facility in California to comply with the request of any prisoner for all materials needed to apply for an absentee ballot.

Many advocates in communities of color have argued that the barriers prisoners experience in voting result in a massive disenfranchisement of persons of color, who are disproportionately imprisoned in America. This bill might to something to help mitigate the problem. ###

Trouble in River City

Continued from page 1

worsened as a result of the crisis. This will make it harder to sell bonds and the state's cost of selling those bonds will go up. In addition, it is far from clear that enough bonds can be sold to replace all the money now being spent on electricity.

As I said, the state government's budget surplus is being drained rapidly. Thus it seems clear that there may not be any money to pay for important new civil rights and health programs. That is the financial risk to those programs.

We have seen evidence of the problem already. It appears that several bills we have been supporting will not go forward in the legislature this year. If you look at the status lines for the bills in the May Legislative Update elsewhere in this newsletter, you will find that several of them have been become "two-year bills." These bills will be given no further consideration until next year. In many cases these bills were made two-year bills because legislators were worried that the

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May Legislative Update

On the status line of several bills listed below you will see a statement that the bill is in the suspense file of the Senate or the Assembly Appropriations Committee. Votes on bills that might cost the state a lot of money are generally delayed by the Appropriation Committee until the so-called "May Revise." The May Revise is a new estimate from the state Department of Finance as to what income the state is likely to receive in the coming fiscal year. That information helps the Appropriations Committee determine just how much money will be available and what bills they can or cannot afford. The bills in the suspense file are generally voted on in the Appropriations Committee in late May after the May Revise has been issued.

You will also see "two-year bill" on the status line of several bills in the list. These bills will not be given any further consideration until next year. Unfortunately, in many cases legislators have given up on their bills for this year because they think the financial drain on state government, from the energy crisis, means that there will be no money to pay for their bills this year.

Here is a list of the bills we have found so far (as of early May) that relate to our four issue areas.

HIV/AIDS Issues

AB 142 (Stuart Richman, R–Granada Hills)
Purpose: To prohibit healthcare plans from forcing physicians to pay the cost of certain healthcare services.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Health Committee. Put on suspense calendar of the Assembly Appropriations Committee for a vote in late May.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 276 (Carole Migden, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To extend to two years a limitation to issue accusations of violations of the right to be free from violence, intimidation, or threats of intimidation, including for persons claimed to be aggrieved by HIV discrimination.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Labor and Employment Committee. Sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date yet.
LLP Position: Support, requesting addition of gender to the list of prohibited bases of intimidation.

AB 916 (Fred Keeley, D–Santa Cruz)
Purpose: To expand the existing requirement for school-based AIDS prevention instruction to include instruction on sexually transmitted infection; and require related instructional materials to be medically accurate and free of ethnic, gender, and racial biases.
Status: Passed the Assembly Education Committee and put in the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 937 (Paul Koretz, D–West Hollywood)
Purpose: To require every healthcare service plan that covers hospital, medical, or surgical expenses to develop and file with the Department of Health Services a plan establishing risk-adjusted capitated rates for the reimbursement of providers for the treatment of enrollees infected with HIV. Would require the Department of Health Services to develop risk-adjusted capitated rates for treatment of Medi-Cal recipients infected with HIV, in accordance with specified requirements.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Health Committee for Hearing on May 8.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1292 (Dion Aroner, D–Berkeley)
Purpose: To allow people to purchase and possess intravenous needles and syringes without a prescription. Requires that pharmacies provide purchasers with information regarding safe disposal of syringes.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Health Committee. No hearing date yet.
LLP Position: Support.

Continued on page 6

See Copies of State Bills

View any state bill on the Lambda Letters Project Web site! Go to www.lambdaletters.org and click on the Legislative Update button. Click on the bill number you're interested in and choose "HTML" to view it.

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Continued from page 5

SB 37 (Jackie Speier, D–San Mateo)
Purpose: To require healthcare service plans and certain disability insurers to provide coverage for all healthcare services related to the treatment of an enrollee or insured in clinical trials for new cancer medications. The study participant must have been diagnosed with cancer.
Status: Passed by the Senate Insurance Committee and the Senate Appropriations Committee. Sent to the floor of the Senate for a final vote in that house.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 187 (John Vasconcellos, D–Santa Clara)
Purpose: To require the State Department of Health to establish and maintain a voluntary program for the issuance of registry identification cards to qualified medical marijuana patients, and to establish procedures under which a patient with the card could use marijuana for medical purposes.
Status: Approved by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee and sent to the Senate Public Safety Committee for a hearing on May 1.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 446 (John Vasconcellos, D–Santa Clara)
Purpose: To require that a healthcare plan or contract with the Board of Administration of the Public Employee's Retirement System shall not exclude from coverage any vaccine for AIDS that is approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration.
Status: Passed by the Senate Public Employment and Retirement Committee and put in the Senate Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 622 (Deborah Ortiz, D–Sacramento)
Purpose: To require that the State Department of Health Services shall revise the Dental-Cal program to include as outpatient services home- and community-based services approved by the Department of Health and Human Services, for beneficiaries with a diagnosis of AIDS (or ARC) who require immediate care or a higher level of care.
Status: Approved by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee and put in the Senate Appropriations Committee's suspense file.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 25 (Carole Migden, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To allow opposite-gender senior citizen couples to register as domestic partners if one of them is over 62 (currently both must be over 62); allow people to make medical decisions for their partners under certain circumstances; require certain insurers to offer domestic partner coverage in their group health or disability plans; require many employers to allow employees time off to care for a sick domestic partner; require that a domestic partner be given preference when conservatorship is being considered for a person; add domestic partners to the statutory will form; remove the income tax liability for employer-provided domestic partner health insurance; allow people to receive unemployment insurance, under certain circumstances, when they quit a job to follow a domestic partner. The bill reverses the feature of AB 26, passed in 1999, which allows state and local governments to offer health insurance to the domestic partners of their retirees, but which terminates the insurance for the partner if the retiree dies first.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Judiciary Committee and the Assembly Labor and Employment Committee. Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. May be heard on May 9.
LLP Position: Support.

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AB 64 (Elaine Alquist, D–Santa Clara)
Purpose: To provide a state income tax deduction for the premiums paid by a taxpayer for long-term care insurance on the taxpayer and his or her spouse and dependents. Alquist may add domestic partners to the bill at the request of Lambda Letters.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Revenue and Taxation Committee. No date set yet for a hearing. May become a two-year bill.
LLP Position: Support if domestic partners are added alongside spouse.

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Legislative Update

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AB 79 (Sally Havice, D–Cerritos)
Purpose: To require schools to prepare plans for protecting the safety of students against bullying by their classmates (a big problem for queer youth) and plans for conflict resolution.
Status: Passed by the Assembly Education Committee. Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. Put in the Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 194 (John Longville, D–San Bernardino)
Purpose: To clarify the process to be used by California courts when certain post-operative transsexuals request legal recognition of their new sex.
Status: Passed by the Assembly Health Committee. Sent to floor of the Assembly. Has been put on inactive file while the author seeks the votes needed for passage.
LLP Position: Support. Lambda Letters is the bill's sponsor.

AB 1193 (Darrell Steinberg, D–Sacramento)
Purpose: To provide that an insurer issuing policies protecting against certain residential, liability, and commercial risks may not cancel or refuse to renew a policy solely on the basis that one or more claims have been made against the policy for a loss that is the result of a hate crime committed against the person or property of an insured. Would require insurance companies to report these claims to the State Insurance Commissioner under certain circumstances.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Insurance Committee for a hearing on May 2.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1278 (Howard Wayne, D–San Diego)
Purpose: To make a number of technical but helpful changes to the laws regarding probate and regarding healthcare decision-makers when the patient is unable to make decisions for him- or herself. Specifically permits a domestic partner to make healthcare decisions for a patient in a facility that employs the domestic partner, as long as the partner is not the supervising healthcare provider for the patient.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Judiciary Committee and the full Assembly. Sent to the Senate and referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1338 (Paul Koretz, D–West Hollywood)
Purpose: To establish a legal entity called a civil union, similar to that established in Vermont. Allows two adults to enter a civil union. Does not require that they be of opposite sexes. Declares that the rights and responsibilities of those who enter a civil union shall be the same as for those who get married.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Judiciary Committee. Made a two-year bill.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1395 (Roy Ashburn, R–Bakersfield)
Purpose: To provide funding for counseling of adoptive parents and children, including issues that arise during the adoptive child's adolescence.
Status: Passed the Assembly Human Services Committee and referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: We will watch this bill to see if the counseling might include aversion or other inappropriate therapy for LGBT youth.

AB 1649 (Jackie Goldberg, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To amend California's Fair Employment and Housing Act to ban employment and housing discrimination against transgendered people.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Labor and Employment Committee. Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support. Lambda Letters is a sponsor of the bill.

SB 143 (Kevin Murray, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To require the Attorney General to provide grants to community-based hate violence prevention and response networks.
Status: Approved by the Senate Public Safety Commit-

Continued on page 8

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Legislative Update

Continued from page 7

tee and sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 144 (Kevin Murray, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To require the Attorney General to establish, operate, and publicize a toll-free telephone number and a Web site to allow victims and witnesses to report hate crimes.
Status: Approved by the Senate Public Safety Committee and sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 381 (Wesley Chesbro, D–Arcata)
Purpose: Current law requires city and county Human Relations Commissions to promote mutual understanding and respect of certain groups in society. This bill adds certain groups to the groups listed in current law. The new list includes people of all sexual orientations, but does not include people of all gender identities. We have asked Senator Chesbro to add gender identity to the list. At the request of Lambda Letters, gender has been added to this bill.
Status: Approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee and sent to the floor of the Senate. Could be voted on anytime.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1049 (Jackie Speier, D–San Mateo)
Purpose: To provide that in San Mateo County, subject to the approval of the board of supervisors, death benefits and survivor's allowances may be payable to a member's surviving domestic partner, as specified.
Status: Referred to the Senate Public Employment Committee for a hearing on May 7.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1121 (Bob Margett, R–Arcadia)
Purpose: Provides a tax credit of 40 percent, subject to federal income tax laws, for corporations that hire qualified state disability insurance recipients, including individuals with HIV and AIDS. Also to provide extended unemployment compensation disability insurance for an additional 26 times an individual's weekly benefit amount to complete approved job training or occupational rehabilitation,

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Legislative Update

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as specified.
Status: Made a two-year bill. It will not be acted upon until next year because the energy crisis is draining the state's financial reserves. Bill will be reconsidered next year once the state's financial picture is clearer.
LLP Position: Support.

People of Color Issues

AB 5 (Thomas Calderon, D–Montebello)
Purpose: To prohibit an insurer from refusing to issue or renew insurance on a private passenger car solely on the basis of a consumer credit report.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Committee on Insurance and referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 8 (Gil Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To allow the state to make grants and loans of up to $55,000 for reconstruction of commercial and industrial buildings in certain downtown areas, when the buildings will provide low-cost rental housing.
Status: Passed by the legislature and signed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 14 (Jackie Goldberg, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To provide an alternative mechanism for funding schools and provide funds for the purpose.
Status: Held back by the author who may be amending the bill.
LLP Position: Neutral.

AB 32 (Keith Richman, R–Chatsworth)
Purpose: To create the Cal-Health Program to be administered by the Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board. Under the program the board would contract with healthcare service plans and disability insurers to provide a range of healthcare coverage options, including a standard uniform benefits package that would be available for purchase at subsidized rates by persons with limited incomes. This bill would require healthcare service plans and disability insurers to offer the standard uniform benefits package and also to offer a catastrophic high-deductible healthcare plan.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Health Committee for a hearing on May 8.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 39 (Helen Thomson, D–Woodland)
Purpose: To allow a tax credit, under certain circumstances, to small employers who pay all or part of the cost of health insurance for their employees.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Revenue and Taxation Committee. Made a two-year bill.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 42 (Howard Wayne, D–San Diego)
Purpose: To establish a state-funded colorectal cancer screening program to be provided to uninsured or underinsured persons, over the age of 50 and with incomes at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.
Status: Passed the Assembly Health Committee and sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 48 (Carl Washington, D–Paramount)
Purpose: To require the state to implement a three-year demonstration project to make grants to eligible alcohol and drug integrated treatment services networks, as defined, in certain counties.
Status: Bill is being amended to specify that funding will come from general funds of the state. Approved by the Assembly Health Committee and sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 51 (Kevin Shelley, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To make a statement regarding the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation that would establish a comprehensive program to identify and abate sources of lead exposure in the state's schools to ensure that all lead hazards in all public schools in the state be identified and

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Legislative Update

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mitigated as quickly as possible. Most of the worst schools with lead-based paint are in poorer ethnic neighborhoods.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Education Committee for a hearing on May 2.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 59 (Gil Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To expand eligibility of children in low-income families for health insurance coverage through the Healthy Families Program. Children are eligible if they are receiving food stamps or participating in the California Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children; Head Start; or the federal school lunch program. The bill requires new procedures to encourage enrollment in the Healthy Families Program.
Status: Passed by the Assembly Health Committee and sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee for Hearing on May 9.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 108 (Virginia Strom-Martin, D–Duncan Mills)
Purpose: To require the state to issue a pharmacy license to authorize the operation of a pharmacy located on the land of a recognized Indian tribe without a pharmacist licensed under California's pharmacy law subject to certain conditions, which would include a requirement for any pharmacist employed by the pharmacy to possess a license to practice pharmacy issued by another state or territory of the United States. It is often difficult to find pharmacists willing to work on Indian reservations. Most other states recognize each others' pharmacy licenses. Only Florida and California do not. Allowing pharmacists with licenses from other states to work on Indian reservations increases the pool of candidates and the chance of finding someone qualified who is willing to work on the reservation.

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Status: The Assembly Health Committee Chair refused to let the bill be heard because of opposition from the California Board of Pharmacy and the pharmacy industry. May be rewritten to gain support.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 114 (Carl Washington, D–Paramount)
Purpose: To provide state funds for grants to residents of cities with populations of over two million to do home repairs to bring their homes into conformance with the city's building codes.
Status: Referred to Assembly Committee on Housing and Community Development. Is a two-year bill.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 127 (Marco Firebaugh, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To designate the California Police Activities League, in consultation with the California Department of Parks and Recreation, to coordinate, plan, and help implement a statewide youth enrichment sports program to combat juvenile delinquency. Would make grants available to local organizations which establish such programs.
Status: Passed by the Assembly Public Safety Committee and sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 144 (Gil Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To allow the exclusion of the value of a car from being considered when determining whether or not a low-income person qualifies for certain publicly funded social service programs.
Status: Passed by the Assembly Human Services Committee and sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 198 (Lou Correa, D–Anaheim)
Purpose: To declare legislative intent to create alternatives for Native American tribes in California to finance and develop infrastructure and public works. Many Indian reservations need considerable improvement to schools roads and other infrastructure. Alternatives, beyond gambling casinos, are needed to finance these improvements.
Status: Not referred to a committee yet.
LLP Position: Support.

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Legislative Update

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AB 423 (Robert Hertzberg, D–Van Nuys)
Purpose: Farm labor contractors, and the people they employ to act as farm labor contractors, must be licensed by the California Labor Commissioner. This bill requires the farm labor contractor to be sure that employees acting for them have a valid current license. It also requires farmers to determine that farm labor contractors have the necessary license before entering into a contract with them
Status: Approved by the Assembly Labor and Employment Committee and sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 503 (Virginia Strom-Martin, D–Duncan Mills)
Purpose: To establish a grant program for public schools in California to develop, expand, and strengthen dual-language education programs. These programs are taught in both English and a minority language. It allows English language–native children to become proficient in another language. It allows other students to become proficient in both their native language and English.
Status: Passed by the Assembly Education Committee and sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 540 (Marco Firebaugh, D–East Los Angeles)
Purpose: To allow all graduates of California high schools, under specified conditions, to pay the California resident tuition rate for attending a California public college or university. Would allow many immigrant students, who now must pay the much higher non-resident tuition, to pay the resident tuition instead.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Higher Education Committee for a hearing on May 3.
LP Position: Support.

AB 548 (George Runner, R–Lancaster)
Purpose: To require the State Department of Health Services to establish a specialty care program for persons who have had problems accessing specialty care.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Health Committee. Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 596 (Gloria Negrete McLeod, D–Montclair)
Purpose: To require the Department of Corrections to test all inmates for hepatitis C 60 days prior to being paroled, as specified. This bill would also require inmates who test positive for the virus to complete a hepatitis C education program administered by the Department of Corrections. Would also require the department to see if an inmate, who tests positive for hepatitis, qualifies for veteran's health benefits and to inform the inmate if he or she qualifies.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Public Safety Committee. Hearing cancelled at author's request.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 675 (Migden, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To provide for improved due process and notification procedures involving the compassionate release of prisoners with HIV/AIDS or other diseases who have six months or fewer to live and who are deemed not to be a threat to the public.
Status: Passed by the Assembly Public safety committee and sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee for a hearing on May 2.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 698 (Herb Wesson, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To create the Office of Immigrant Assistance in the office of the Attorney General to provide education and outreach services, as defined, to the resident immigrant community of the state. Would also require that the information developed for these purposes be printed or broadcast in any language deemed necessary to reach immigrant communities.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Human Services Committee and referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

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Legislative Update

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AB 763 (Kevin Shelley, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To require that information and materials provided over the Internet explaining services available from a state agency, or notice of availability of materials made in electronic form consistent with use over the Internet, shall be translated into any non-English language spoken by a substantial number of people served by the agency, and also distributed through any applicable Web sites under those circumstances.
Status: Is being dropped by the author. The provisions of this bill are being added to AB 805.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 788 (Marco Firebaugh, D–East Los Angeles)
Purpose: To broaden the definition of racial profiling by state or local police. Provides for money damages from law-enforcement personnel and public agencies to victims of racial profiling. Requires state and local police forces to report traffic stops and to include data about the stops relating to possible racial profiling. Specifies that such reports not include information by which the person stopped could be identified. Would also make police officers and their agencies liable for violation of racial profiling laws.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Public Safety Committee and referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. May be heard on May 16.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 800 (Herb Wesson, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To prohibit employers from requiring English speaking only in the workplace unless there is a business need for it.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Labor and Employment Committee and the Assembly Judiciary Committee and sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 805 (Kevin Shelly, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To require state agencies that maintain a Web site to provide links on their home page to appropriate non-English information, at least in Spanish and Chinese, consistent with the requirements of the Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Committee on Jobs, Economic Development and the Economy and referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No Hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 989 (Wilma Chan, D–Oakland)
Purpose: Existing law requires the State Department of Social Services to establish programs to provide food assistance and cash assistance for non-citizens who, due to their immigration status, are not eligible for federal food stamps and for SSI/SSP benefits, and specifies that an applicant who is otherwise eligible for the program but entered the United States after August 22, 1996, and who is not otherwise exempt, shall be eligible for assistance for the period beginning on October 1, 1999, and ending September 30, 2001. This bill would eliminate the termination date of that period of eligibility. People in need could continue getting assistance.
Status: Passed the Assembly Human Services Committee and sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee for a hearing on May 2.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1321 (Dion Aroner, D–Berkeley)
Purpose: To create the Health Utilities Board, which would be charged with providing comprehensive, quality healthcare to all Californians and controlling healthcare costs through rate setting, eliminating waste and inefficiency, and achieving public accountability for meeting standards of high quality care.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Health Committee for a hearing on April 24. Hearing cancelled by author.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1423 (Helen Thomson, D–Davis)
Purpose: To include licensed marriage and family therapist services, and clinical social worker services, within the

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Discrimination Complaints

Have you experienced employment discrimination because of your actual or perceived sexual orientation or because of your age (40 and over), ancestry, color, creed, disability, marital status, medical condition, national origin, race, religion, or sex? Have you been denied family and medical care leave or pregnancy disability leave?

If so, you may register a complaint with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing. In cases of employment discrimination, call the department at (800) 884-1684. In cases of housing discrimination, call (800) 233-3212. The person answering the phone will schedule an appointment for you at the Department of Fair Employment and Housing Office which is closest to your home or place of employment.

Legislative Update

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scope of Medi-Cal covered benefits to the extent that federal matching funds are available, including home- and community-based services approved by the Department of Health and Human Services for beneficiaries with a diagnosis of AIDS (or ARC) who require intermediate care or a higher-level of care.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Health Committee for a hearing on May 8.
LLP Position: Support.

ABX1 3 (Roderick Wright, D–South Central Los Angeles)
Purpose: To require the California Public Utilities Commission to take steps to increase participation in the CARE Program, an electric and gas payment assistance program for low-income people.
Status: Passed by the Assembly. Referred to the Senate Committee on Energy, Utilities and Communications for a hearing on May 2.
LLP Position: Support.

ACR 17 (George Nakano, D–Torrance)
Purpose: To declare February 19, 2001, as a Day of Remembrance in order to increase public awareness of the events surrounding the internment of Americans of Japanese ancestry during World War II.
Status: Signed by Governor Davis.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 21 (Martha Escutia, D–Norwalk)
Purpose: To require school districts to inspect all schools constructed prior to 1992 for lead hazards and to devise an appropriate abatement plan, where necessary; require the Department of Health Services to provide technical assistance; require the school district to carry out the abatement of lead hazards; and require school districts, subject to funding being made available, to provide training to maintenance workers to enable them to properly identify and abate lead hazards.
Status: Approved by the Senate Environmental Quality Committee and referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 30 (Wesley Chesbro, D–Arcata)
Purpose: To require the State Department of Mental Health, the Department of Finance, and the Office of the Legislative Analyst to form a workgroup to study various options to restructure mental health services and funding in California, and would require the workgroup to make recommendations to the Legislature and Governor Davis on or before January 31, 2002. People of color certainly have no more mental health problems than anyone else. However, they are among the most uninsured in the state and whatever insurance is available often has little or no mental health coverage.
Status: Approved by the Senate Health and Human Service Committee and referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support

SB 41 (Deirdre Alpert, D–San Diego)
Purpose: To require the State Librarian to allocate grants to school districts to develop Native American instructional materials.
Status: Approved by the Senate Education Committee and the Senate Appropriations Committee. Sent to the floor of the Senate for a final vote in that house.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 59 (Martha Escutia, D–Norwalk)

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Legislative Update

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Purpose: To authorize demonstration projects to allow healthcare coverage for immigrants, homeless individuals, people living with HIV/AIDS, and other populations currently facing health disparities. The bill would authorize grants to healthcare providers and community-based clinics to organize into formalized networks that provide healthcare services to migrant populations as they move through the state during the year. The bill authorizes grants to establish demonstration projects that would assist healthcare providers in developing enabling programs making the targeted groups aware of the healthcare programs available to them.

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Status: Double referred to the Senate Committee on Insurance and the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services. Passed both committees. Put in the Senate Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 98 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Santa Monica)
Purpose: To permit certain cities and counties to contract with the State Department of Mental Health and the State Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs, jointly, to provide specified services under the Medi-Cal program to low-income persons with a dual diagnosis of alcohol or drug addiction and serious, persistent mental illness.
Status: Approved by the Senate Insurance Committee and the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. Put in the Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 410 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Santa Monica)
Purpose: To prohibit employers from requiring employees to agree to arbitrate any claim arising under the California Fair Employment and Housing Act. Would prohibit employers from firing, harassing, expelling, or otherwise discriminating against an employee for refusing to agree to such arbitration.
Status: Referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee for a hearing on April 17. Hearing cancelled by author. No new date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 987 (Martha Escutia, D–Norwalk)
Purpose: To require proper implementation of the previously passed Dymally-Alatorre Act. That act required state and local agencies to offer their services in languages other than English when there is a significant need. Surveys have found that many agencies are not complying with the earlier act.
Status: Approved by the Senate Governmental Organization Committee and sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

Women's Issues

AB 4 (Patricia Bates, R–Laguna Nigel)
Purpose: To require people convicted of certain sex offenses to register with the campus chief of police and with the local chief of police or sheriff for the rest of their lives and whenever they enroll in any university, college, or community college. This bill would also revise the current registration provisions, involving university and college campuses, to include transients and employees at these institutions and to require registrants to appear personally to notify the campus police department within five working days of changing his or her location or of ceasing to be enrolled or employed at the college or university.
Status: Passed by the Assembly Committee on Public Safety and referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee for a hearing on May 9.
LLP Position: Support while expressing concern about requiring lifelong registration.

AB 6 (Tony Cardenas, D–Mission Hills)
Purpose: To permit schools to establish before- and after-school enrichment programs for children, and to establish maximum grants for these programs.
Status: Passed by the Assembly Education Committee and sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 43 (Herb Wesson, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To create the Commission on Pay Equity, which would evaluate and determine equitable compensation for state employees. Would require the commission to report to the Legislature and the parties meeting and conferring under the Ralph C. Dills Act and the Higher Education

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Employer-Employee Relations Act.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Public Employees Retirement and Social Security Committee. Approved by the Assembly Appropriations Committee and sent to the Assembly floor for a final vote in that house.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 130 (Tony Cardenas, D–Sylmar)
Purpose: To expand and reorganize a state-funded family planning program to make it a comprehensive preventive and health screening program for low-income women under 65. Would provide funding for family planning services, but specifically excludes funding for abortion-related services or advice. Current law already prohibits spending for abortions and this law leaves that provision unchanged.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Health Committee for a hearing on May2.
LLP Position: Support with reservations about the abortion issue.

AB 160 (Patricia Bates, R–Laguna Niguel)
Purpose: To specify that a restraining order or protective order has precedence over any civil court order. Would prohibit courts with jurisdiction over civil matters from issuing orders that are not in compliance with a restraining or protective order issued against a defendant in a domestic violence criminal case. Would prohibit courts with jurisdiction over domestic violence criminal cases from issuing restraining or protective orders against a defendant that allow a civil court to compromise the protections provided by the order. Would provide that restraining or protective orders issued in domestic violence criminal cases shall remain in force throughout a defendant's sentence, including incarceration, probation, and parole.
Status: Double referred to the Assembly Committee on Public Safety and the Assembly Judiciary Committee. Will go to the Judiciary Committee first for a hearing on May1.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 180 (Gil Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To exempt from state sales tax items sold by a thrift store in support of an agency that provides services to people with cancer or a terminal illness. Current law already provides an exemption for thrift stores that support

Trouble in River City

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energy crisis would leave no money at all to pay for their bills. There are rumors that many bills in the legislature face the same fate, for the same reason.

There is also a **political risk** that is affecting the legislation and programs that we care about. It is very possible that Californians face severely higher utility bills in the near future. It also appears that we face the prospect of frequent blackouts during the coming summer. Both of these factors could have a serious negative impact on California's economy, causing large-scale job layoffs.

Do you think this will get people mad? Of course it will. And it is highly likely that people will blame the party in power in the governor's office and the State Legislature. This greatly increases the chance that the Republicans will take over the governor's office and the state legislature after the next election. Those of you who have read my columns in the past know that I am highly annoyed at the Democrats for their failure to do the right things in the areas of civil rights and healthcare. However, it is clear even to me that things would be even worse in a Republican-led state administration.

We all need to fight like hell to get as much important legislation passed this year as possible. That means it's absolutely essential that you sign and quickly return all the sample letters we send you each month. If you prefer, compose and sign your own letters and quickly send them to us for delivery to your legislators.

Ask to be added to our e-mail alert list. Send your request to us at LambdaLP@aol.com. You will get several alerts a month allowing you to e-mail your legislators on important legislative issues.

Get *all* of your friends to join Lambda Letters and get them to join our e-mail alert list. The more people who are hounding our elected officials to do the right thing, the more likely they will do it.

Finally, send a contribution if you can. We have many, many people who spend many hours of volunteer time on behalf of Lambda Letters. Even so, we have significant expenses. Your dollars can do much to assure that our work can continue and that the important legislation we all care about will become law.

Please be there for me. Be there for the community. Be there for yourself. Help us get the job done!

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agencies that serve people with HIV or AIDS. This bill eliminates the ending date for the tax exemption which is in current law.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Revenue and Tax Committee. Is in that committee's suspense file. May be voted on sometime in May.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 731 (Howard Wayne, D–San Diego)
Purpose: To clarify and strengthen the rules for enforcing restraining orders that were issued by courts outside of California.
Status: Passed by the Assembly Judiciary Committee and referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee for a hearing on May 9.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 66 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Santa Monica)
Purpose: To require the court, when considering issuance of a protective order, to search specified records and databases to determine if the proposed subject of the order has any specified prior criminal convictions or outstanding warrants, is on parole or probation, or is or was the subject of other protective or restraining orders. Would require the prosecuting attorney, in all prosecutions of certain crimes when a conviction is obtained, to cause a search to be made of specified databases, for review by the court, to determine if the defendant is the subject of any protective or restraining orders and to notify other courts of the pending prosecution.
Status: Passed by the Senate Public Safety Committee and Senate Judiciary Committee. Referred to Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 217 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To require counties to include, in the county CalWORKS plan, the development of services to domestic violence victims, and specify services to assist victims of domestic violence to become self-sufficient. (Cal WORKS is a program designed to help welfare recipients return to work.)
Status: Passed by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee and sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee. Hearing in that committee postponed at the request of the author.
LLP Position: Support.

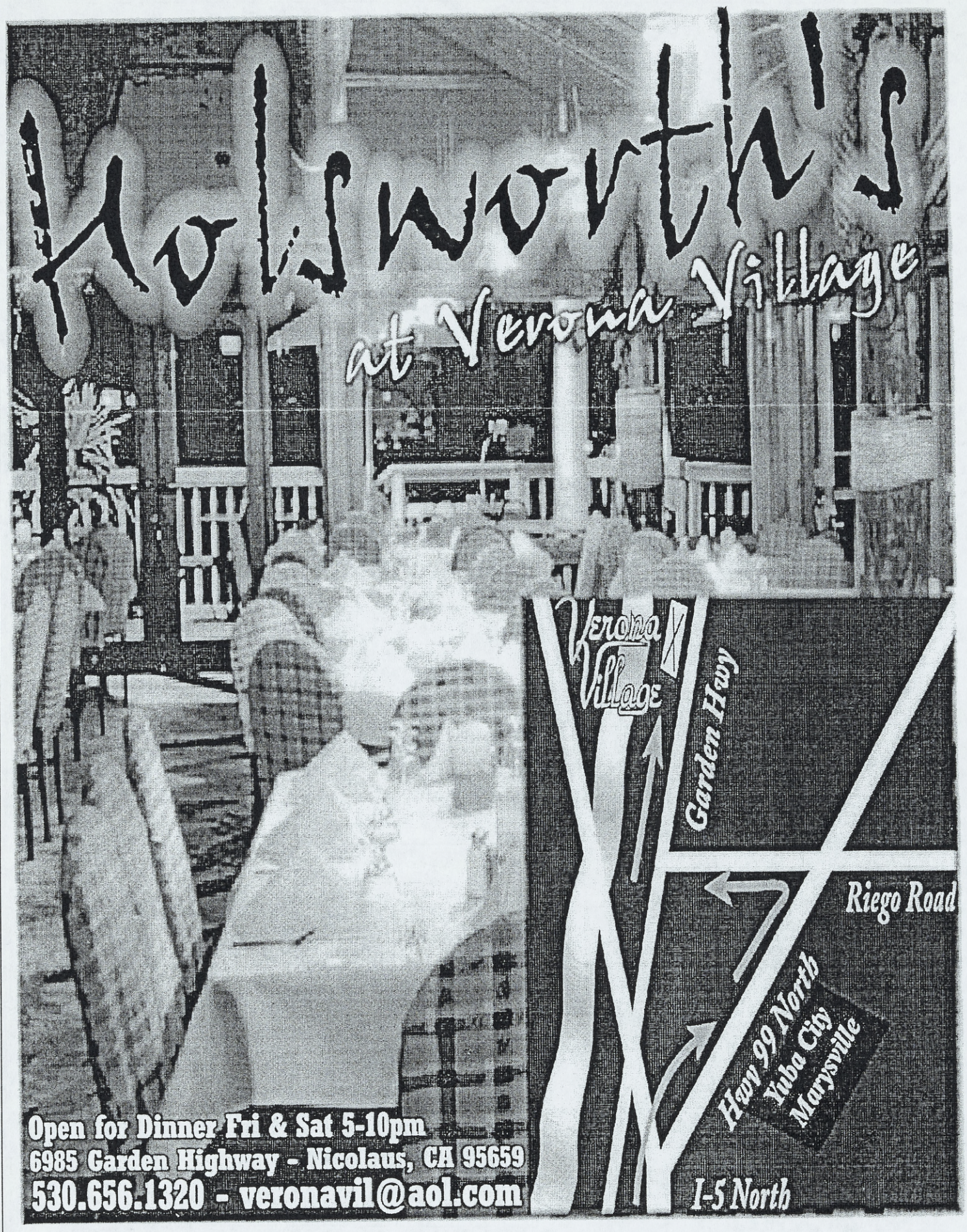
SB 224 (Jackie Speier, D–San Mateo)
Purpose: To require the department of Health Services to submit a state plan amendment to the federal Health Care Financing Administration, adopting the optional categorically needy eligibility group described in the federal Breast and Cervical Cancer Prevention and Treatment Act of 2000, thereby providing breast and cervical cancer treatment under the Medi-Cal program, subject to federal financial participation. The "optional categorically needy" described in the federal bill are low-income people being given cancer treatment, paid for by the state, but whose circumstances do not allow the state to request matching federal funds to help cover the cost of the treatment.
Status: Passed by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. Sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee suspense file. Much of this bill may be gutted because of the economic drain to the state of the energy crisis. However, the author is confident that the bill's core will survive, if only to get the matching federal funds.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 927 (Martha Escutia, D–Norwalk)
Purpose: To require the appointment in domestic violence proceedings, and in other settings mandated by the court, of an interpreter for a person who is deaf or hearing-impaired as well as the appointment of a foreign language interpreter for a person not proficient in English; to require certified sign language interpreters in these proceedings; and to limit the services of foreign language interpreters to certified interpreters. The bill would provide for the waiver of fees for an interpreter for a petitioner who is not proficient in English in domestic violence proceedings, as well as for any person who appears *in forma pauperis* (with court fees waived), or for any other party pursuant to a court order. This bill would also require the Judicial Council to establish additional domestic violence training requirements for interpreters, as specified, and to conduct a public education and notification program
Status: Approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee and sent to the Senate Appropriations committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 993 (Liz Figueroa, D–Fremont)
Purpose: To increase the amount of money paid by the state to childcare centers for the cost of caring for low-income children.
Status: Approved by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee and referred to the Senate Committee on Education. Has been made a two-year bill.
LLP Position: Support.

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